REMARKS

Claims 3-6, 8, 10-13, 15, 16, 18-20, 22, 23, and 27-37 are pending in this application.

Applicants acknowledge the allowance of claim 35 and the allowability of claims 18-20 as set forth in paragraph 6, page 8 of the Office action.

Response to Rejection of Claims

Claim 31

Claim 31 is directed to an absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising:

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, wherein the MD strands are elongate and are spaced according to a first spacing frequency, and at least some of said CD strands have as a characteristic difference a second spacing frequency different from the first spacing frequency, the second reduced frequency spacing of the

CD strands being varied in different zones of the elongate MD strands to provide a variance in stiffness between such zones.

Figures 2C and 10 of the present application are general illustrations of one embodiment constructed according to the features of claim 31. The frequency of the spacing of the CD strands (784) is varied such that, for example, a single control zone (787) may be located along the line of the MD strands (782) to form a more pliable crotch area of the diaper. See specification, page 30, paragraph [0079].

Claim 31 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record, and in particular U.S. Patent No. 6,093,663 (Ouellette et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0009940 (May et al.), in that whether considered alone or in combination, the references fail to show or suggest the combination of features recited in claim 31. In particular, from a fundamental standpoint, the cited references fail to expressly or inherently teach an absorbent article that has an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use. In addition, the references fail to expressly or inherently teach or suggest CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction.

As shown in Figs. 1 and 2, Ouellette et al. disclose a laminate structure 20 comprising a first fabric layer 22 and an open cell mesh 24. The open cell mesh 24 has a plurality of first strands 26 and a plurality of second strands 28 (mislabeled 29 in Figs. 1 and 2) intersecting the first strands at nodes 30 to form a net-like structure. The first strands 26 are used to bond the mesh 24 to the first fabric layer 22, and

the second strands 28 are used to render the laminate structure 20 elastic along the direction of second strands.

Ouellette et al. disclose that the laminate structure 20 can be incorporated into a variety of products including sweat bands, elastic diapers, incontinence products, bandages, body wraps, and the like. See column 1, lines 15-17 and column 3, lines 59-61. As disclosed in the present invention, absorbent articles (e.g., infant diapers, children's training pants, feminine care articles, adult incontinence garments, bandages and the like) typically include various components such as a backsheet, a topsheet, and an absorbent core located between the backsheet and the topsheet. See specification, page 7 and 8, paragraphs [0041] and [0043].

Nowhere do Ouellette et al. expressly or inherently teach intimately associating their structure with an absorbent core of an absorbent article. In fact, Ouellette et al. appear to teach away from such a use. Ouellette et al. appear to teach that it is another component of the absorbent article (i.e., the topsheet or the backsheet) that can be formed with their laminated structure. For example, Ouellette at al. state that it is desirable that the first fabric layer have a caliper less than about 0.1 cm and, more preferably, less than about 0.02 cm. See column 6, lines 34-42. Calipers (i.e., thicknesses) within the ranges disclosed by Ouellette et al. are indicative of either the topsheet or the backsheet of absorbent articles and not the absorbent core. Absorbent article components with a thickness of less than about 0.1 cm would be inadequate to receive and hold body fluid. Thus, Ouellette et al. fails to teach or suggest an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use as recited in claim 31.

In addition, Ouellette et al. do not teach or suggest an absorbent core having CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than a stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction. Rather, Ouellette et al. disclose that the laminate structure is more elastic along the direction of second strands than along the direction of the first strands. Elasticity and stiffness are not necessarily coexistent. As defined by Ouellette et al., "elastic" means a directional property wherein an element or structure has a recovery within about 10% of its original length in the subject direction after being subjected to a percentage strain of greater than 50 percent. See column 4, lines 2-7. Stiffness, on the other hand, means not easily bent, rigid. See http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/stiffness.

Ouellette et al. are completely silent as to the stiffness of the strands forming the web. Ouellette et al. do not teach or suggest either expressly or inherently an absorbent core having CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than a stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction as recited in claim 31.

May et al. disclose an elastic laminate TEL with different zones of tension across its width. As shown in Fig. 1, the elastic laminate TEL includes an elastic nonwoven layer 6 having at least one low tension zone 10 and high tension zone 14. The low tension zone 10 has plurality of elastomeric first filaments 12, and the high tension zone 14 has a plurality of elastomeric second filaments 16. The second filaments 16 have a different tension than the first filaments 12. As a result, the high and low tension zones of the laminate TEL have different average elastic tensions and thus different ultimate elongation.

May et al. further disclose that the laminate can be used in personal care absorbent garments including, for instance, diapers, training pants, swim wear, absorbent underpants, adult incontinence products, feminine hygiene products, baby wipes, and medical absorbent garments. See paragraph [0095]. Fig. 10 of May et al. shows a pair of training pants 10 including a chassis 5 and two side panels 1, 3 comprising the laminate TEL. The laminate formed side panels 1, 3 are used to create waist elastic regions 7 and leg elastic regions 9 so that the pants 10 fit snugly against the wearer. See also paragraph [0095] of May et al. which states that the laminate TEL is especially useful in absorbent articles requiring elastic in the waist and/or leg regions of a wearer. Nowhere do May et al. indicate that the laminate TEL can be used in an absorbent core.

Thus, May et al. fail to teach an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use as recited in claim 31.

Moreover, May et al. do not teach or suggest an absorbent core having CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than a stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction. Rather, May et al. discloses a laminate having zones with different tensions. Tension and stiffness are not necessarily coexistent. As indicated by May et al., "tension" is the amount of force per unit width needed to stretch the material to a given elongation, and "ultimate elongation" is the ultimate length per unit length that a material can be stretched to without causing permanent deformation. See paragraphs [0030] and [0048]. As mentioned above, stiffness means not easily bent, rigid. See http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/stiffness. May

et al. are completely silent as to the stiffness of the laminate.

Accordingly, May et al. do not teach or suggest either expressly or inherently an absorbent core having CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than a stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction as recited in claim 31.

Since both Ouellette et al. and May et al. fail to teach or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, a combination of these references likewise fails to disclose or suggest such a feature. Accordingly, claim 31 is submitted to be patentable over the references of record including Ouellette et al. and May et al.

Moreover, Ouellette et al. and May et al., whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest an absorbent core including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core wherein the MD strands are spaced according to a first spacing frequency, and at least some of the CD strands have a second spacing frequency different from the first spacing frequency, the second reduced frequency spacing of the CD strands being varied in different zones of the elongate MD strands to provide a variance in stiffness between such zones.

As mentioned above, Ouellette et al. do not teach or suggest varying the spacing of the strands 26, 28 in different zones of the fabric. Thus, Ouellette et al. do not teach or

suggest a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core wherein the spacing frequency of the CD strands are varied in different zones of the elongate MD strands to provide a variance in stiffness between such zones as recited in claim 31.

May et al. teach that the laminate can be used to form waist elastic regions 7 and leg elastic regions 9 so that the pants 10 fit snugly against the wearer. May et al. teach that the first and second filaments 12, 14 extend in the same direction (i.e., the MD direction or the CD direction). Nowhere do May et al. teach or suggest that the filaments can cross or otherwise extend in both the MD and the CD direction. As a result, the filaments of May et al. extending in the CD direction cannot have different spacing in different zones of the filaments extending in the MD direction. Accordingly, May et al. also fail to teach or suggest a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core wherein the spacing frequency of the CD strands are varied in different zones of the elongate MD strands to provide a variance in stiffness between such zones as recited in claim 31

Since both Ouellette et al. and May et al. fail to teach or suggest an absorbent article including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core wherein the spacing frequency of the CD strands are varied in different zones of the elongate MD strands to provide a variance in stiffness between such zones, a combination of these references likewise fails to disclose or suggest such a feature.

For these reasons, claim 31 is submitted to be nonobvious and patentable over the references of record. Claims 3-6, 8, 15, 16, and 27-30 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 31 and are submitted to be patentable over the references of record for at least the same reasons as claim 31.

Claim 32

Claim 32 is directed to an absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising:

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, wherein said MD strands have strand diameters, and wherein said CD strands have as a characteristic difference a strand diameter less than said MD strand diameter.

Claim 32 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record, and in particular Ouellette et al. in view of May et al. for substantially the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 31. That is, whether considered alone or in combination, the references fail to show or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is

less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction.

Moreover, Ouellette et al. and May et al., whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest an absorbent core having a reinforcing scrim member wherein CD strands have a strand diameter less than a MD strand diameter.

There is nothing in Ouellette et al. that teaches CD strands having a strand diameter less than the MD strand diameter. This point was recognized by the Office at paragraph 12, page 9 of the previous Office action dated August 29, 2005.

May et al. teach extending elastomeric filaments in a single direction. Specifically, as shown in Fig. 10, May et al. teach extending elastomeric filaments in the CD direction. Nowhere do May et al. disclose extending elastomeric filaments in the MD, or in both the CD and the MD. Thus, May et al. must fail to disclose a reinforcing scrim member wherein CD strands have a strand diameter less than a MD strand diameter.

Since both Ouellette et al. and May et al. fail to teach or suggest CD strands having a strand diameter less than the MD strand diameter, a combination of these references similarly fails to teach or suggest such a feature. Moreover, there is no disclosure found in either reference that would motivate one skilled in the art to reverse the MD and CD strand sizing taught by Ouellette et al., particularly in view of the fact that May et al. is directed to filaments that extend in only a single direction.

Accordingly, claim 32 is submitted to be nonobvious in view of and patentable over the references of record. Claims 10-13 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 32 and are submitted to be patentable over the references of record for at least the same reasons as claim 32.

Claim 33

Claim 33 is directed to an absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising:

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, wherein both of said MD strands and said CD strands are round, and the CD strands are smaller than the MD strands.

Claim 33 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record, and in particular Oulette et al. in combination with May et al., for substantially the same reasons as set forth in connection with claim 31. That is, Ouellette et al. and May et al., whether considered in combination or alone, fail to teach or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross

direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction.

Moreover, Ouellette et al. and May et al., whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest an absorbent core having a reinforcing scrim member wherein both of the MD strands and the CD strands are round, and the CD strands are smaller than the MD strands.

There is nothing in Ouellette et al. that teaches CD strands that are smaller than the MD strands. This point was recognized by the Office at paragraph 12, page 9 of the previous Office action dated August 29, 2005.

May et al. teach extending elastomeric filaments in a single direction. Specifically, as shown in Fig. 10, May et al. teach extending elastomeric filaments in the CD direction. Nowhere do May et al. disclose extending elastomeric filaments in the MD, or in both the CD and the MD. Thus, May et al. must fail to disclose a reinforcing scrim member wherein CD strands are smaller than MD strands.

Since both Ouellette et al. and May et al. fail to teach or suggest CD strands that are smaller than MD strands, a combination of these references similarly fails to teach or suggest such a feature. Moreover, there is no disclosure found in either reference that would motivate one skilled in the art to reverse the MD and CD strand sizing taught by Ouellette et al., particularly in view of the fact that May et al. is directed to filaments that extend in only a single direction.

Accordingly, claim 32 is submitted to be nonobvious in view of and patentable over the references of record.

Claim 34

Claim 34 is directed to an absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, wherein the network of MD strands and CD strands is formed with at least some of the CD strands being continuous and having weakened points along their lengths to enhance buckling.

Claim 34 is submitted to be patentable over the references of record, and in particular Ouellette et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,622,581 (Ducker et al.), in that whether considered alone or in combination, the references fail to show or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, and 3)

wherein the network of MD strands and CD strands is formed with at least some of the CD strands being continuous and having weakened points along their lengths to enhance buckling.

As discussed in detail above with respect to claim 31, Ouellette et al. fail to show or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction. In addition, Ouellette et al. fail to show or suggest ae network of MD strands and CD strands formed with at least some of the CD strands being continuous and having weakened points along their lengths to enhance buckling as recited in claim 34.

Ducker et al. also fail to teach or suggest these features. As shown in Figs. 1 and 2, Ducker et al. disclose a method of making absorbent articles (e.g., a pair of training pants) wherein elastic strands 12 are bound between an outer non-woven fabric 14 and a film barrier 13. The elastic strands 12 are de-elastized along a portion of their length so that they do not apply tension to the crotch region of the final garment. Absorbent pads 15 and an inner non-woven liner 11 are added to the web 1 to form a combined web 16. The web 16 can be severed to form disposable garments.

The elastic strands 12 of Ducker et al. are not intimately associated with the absorbent pads 15 to maintain their structural integrity in use. Instead, the elastic strands are confined between two components of the outer layer (i.e., outer non-woven fabric 14 and film barrier 13) and are used to form leg cuffs. Accordingly, Ducker et al. fail to teach or suggest

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use.

Moreover, nowhere do Ducker et al. indicate that the elastic strands affect the stiffness of the absorbent pad in anyway. Thus, Ducker et al. also fail to teach or suggest CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction.

Furthermore, Ducker et al. fail to disclose or suggest a network of MD strands and CD strands wherein at least some of the CD strands are continuous and have weakened points along their lengths to enhance buckling. In fact, Ducker et al. teach that one of the reasons the elastic strands are de-elasticized is to prevent the elastic strands from causing the absorbent core to assume a convex shape in the crotch region. See column 1, lines 48-53. Thus, Ducker et al. actually teach that buckling of the absorbent core should be avoided.

Since both Ouellette et al. and Ducker et al. fail to teach or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, and 3) the network of MD strands and CD strands is formed with at least some of the CD strands being continuous and having weakened points along their lengths to enhance buckling, a combination of these references likewise fails to disclose or suggest such

features. For these reasons, claim 34 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record.

Claim 36

Claim 36 is directed to an absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising:

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, wherein the CD strand is corrugated and forms peaks and valleys along the cross direction thereof, and said MD strands being arranged to engage the CD strands across the peaks and valleys thereof.

Claim 36 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record, and in particular Ouellette et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,107,371 (Dean), in that whether considered alone or in combination, the references fail to show or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in

use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction.

Ouellette et al. do not teach an absorbent article having 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction as recited in claim 36. Applicants position with respect to the Ouellette et al. lack of disclosure with regard to these features is set forth in detail above with respect to claim 31.

Dean is directed to a woven fabric that is relatively stiff in one direction and relatively flexible in another. Nowhere does Dean mention the use of the fabric in an absorbent article or as an absorbent core of an absorbent article. Accordingly, Dean fails to teach or suggest 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than the stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction as recited in claim 36.

Since Ouellette et al. and Dean fail to teach or suggest the same features of claim 36, a combination of the references must also fail to teach or suggest all of the features of claim 36. Thus, claim 36 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record.

Moreover, there is no motivation or suggestion to combine Ouellette et al. and Dean. As mentioned above, Ouellette et al. disclose a laminate structure 20 comprising a first fabric layer 22 and an open cell mesh 24. The open cell mesh 24 has a plurality of first strands 26 and a plurality of second strands 28 (mislabeled 29 in Figs. 1 and 2) intersecting the first strands at nodes 30 to form a net-like structure. The first strands 26 are used to bond the mesh 24 to the first fabric layer 22, and the second strands 28 are used to render the laminate structure 20 elastic along the direction of second strands. Heat and pressure are used to bond the first strands 22 to the first fabric layer 22 such that a portion of the first strands penetrate into the first fabric layer.

The Office suggests that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art based on the teachings of Dean to modify the strands of Ouellette et al. such that the CD strands are corrugated and the MD strands were arranged to engage the CD strands across the peaks and valleys thereof. Oullette et al. teach that the first strands, which are the MD strands, should be adjacent the fabric layer so that the first strands are able to bond to the fabric and lay relatively flat to prevent the mesh from contacting the user. By arranging the MD strands across the peaks and valleys of the CD strands as suggested by the Office, the MD strands would be inhibited from contacting the fabric layer along its entire length and would not lay flat. Thus, the MD strands would not be able to fully penetrate the fabric layer and would undesirably contact the user during use. Accordingly, one of skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Dean with those of Ouellette et al.

For these additional reasons, claim 36 is further submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record.

Claim 37

Claim 37 is directed to an absorbent article for absorbing body fluids comprising:

an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, said scrim member comprising a network of machine direction (MD) strands extending in a machine direction, and cross direction (CD) strands extending in a cross direction, at least some of said MD strands and CD strands crossing over each other and being interconnected, said MD strands being selected and formed to provide a predetermined stiffness and strength in supporting said absorbent core in the machine direction, and said CD strands being selected and formed with at least one characteristic difference from said MD strands to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than a stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction, wherein the CD strands are woven under and over the MD strands.

Claim 37 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record, and in particular Ouellette et al. in view of Dean for substantially the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 36. That is, whether considered alone or in combination, Ouellette et al. and Dean fail to show or suggest an absorbent article including 1) an absorbent core constructed and arranged for receiving and holding such fluids and including a reinforcing scrim member intimately associated with the absorbent core to maintain its structural integrity in use, and 2) CD strands selected and formed to provide a stiffness of the absorbent core in the cross direction that is less than a stiffness of the absorbent core in the machine direction.

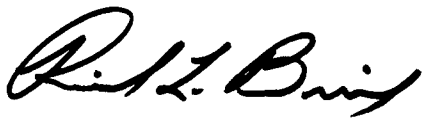
Moreover, there is no motivation or suggest to combine Ouellette et al. and Dean. Oullette et al. teach that the first strands, which are the MD strands, should be adjacent the fabric layer so that the first strands are able to bond to the fabric and lay relatively flat to prevent the mesh from contacting the user. By weaving the CD strands under and over the MD strands as suggested by the Office the MD strands would be inhibited from contacting the fabric layer along its entire length and would not lay flat. Thus, the MD strands would not be able to fully penetrate the fabric layer and would undesirably contact the user during use. Accordingly, one of skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Dean with those of Oullette et al.

As a result, claim 36 is submitted to be non-obvious and patentable over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, favorable consideration and allowance of claims 3-6, 8, 10-13, 15, 16, 18-20, 22, 23, and 27-37 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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